

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 01209 221807Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-11 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOTE-00 EB-07 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 PM-04 NSC-05

SP-02 SS-15 /069 W

----- 103701

R 221755Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5888

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION USBERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 01209

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, GW, WB, UK, US, FR

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: AIR FRANCE PROPOSAL OF ADDITIONAL IGS
SERVICES

REF: A. BONN 19526 B. STATE 11731

1. FRENCH CAA LASSUS HAS TABLED FORMAL APPLICATION FOR THREE NEW IGS SERVICES DESCRIBED IN REFTEL. PROPOSED SCHEDULE INVOLVES ONE SERVICE DEPARTING PARIS 0600 HOURS (ALL TIMES GMT) ARRIVING DUSSELDORF 0710 HOURS, DEPARTING 0745 AND ARRIVING BERLIN 0855. THE RETURN LEG DEPARTS BERLIN 0945, ARRIVES COLOGNE 1055, TERMINATING AT PARIS 1240. ANOTHER SERVICE WILL DEPART PARIS 1200 HOURS, ARRIVING AT COLOGNE 1310 AND BERLIN AT 1455. THE FLIGHT TURNS AROUND AN HOUR LATER, ARRIVES IN DUSSELDORF AT 1655, AND IS BACK IN PARIS BY 1840. BOTH OF THESE SERVICES WILL USE CARAVEL EQUIPMENT.

2. THE THIRD SERVICE STOPS IN DUSSELDORF IN BOTH DIRECTIONS, DEPARTING PARIS 1730, ARRIVING IN DUSSELDORF 1835 AND BERLIN AT 2020 WHERE THE AIRCRAFT LAYS OVER FOR NINE HOURS. THE RETURN FLIGHT DEPARTS BERLIN 0520,
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PAGE 02 BONN 01209 221807Z

ARRIVES IN DUSSELDORF 0625, DEPARTING 0705 FOR PARIS,

WHERE IT ARRIVES AT 0810. THIS SERVICE WILL USE A BOEING 727-200 AND, WE PRESUME, IS SCHEDULED TO LINK-UP WITH AIR FRANCE'S CONCORDE FLIGHT TO RIO DE JANEIRO. LASSUS REPORTED THAT FINAL FRG MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT (READ LUFTHANSA) CONCURRENCE IN THE DUSSELDORF TIME SLOTS HAS NOT YET BEEN RECEIVED, ALTHOUGH AIR FRANCE WAS CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC THE GERMANS WOULD GO ALONG WITH THE PROPOSAL.

3. BRITISH CAA GROVES SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED THE SERVICE WITH BA REPS, WHO APPEARED TO HAVE NO SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN PRINCIPLE, BUT WANTED TO HAVE A CLOSE LOOK AT THE SCHEDULING BEFORE REACHING ANY FINAL DECISIONS ON THEIR POSITION. LASSUS SAID HE THOUGHT AIR FRANCE HAD BEEN CAREFUL TO KEEP ITS DUSSELDORF SERVICES AT LEAST AN HOUR APART FROM BA'S, A FACT GROVES SAID HE COULD NOT CHECK AS YET, SINCE HE DID NOT HAVE BA'S PROPOSED SUMMER SCHEDULE. HE SAID HE WOULD MAKE NO FURTHER COMMENT UNTIL HE HAS HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW THE MATTER AGAIN WITH BA, IN THE LIGHT OF THE BRITISH CARRIER'S DUSSELDORF SCHEDULE FOR THE FORTHCOMING SUMMER SEASON.

4. WE DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH PAA DIRECTOR RUNNETTE, WHO SAID HE WAS INCLINED TO OPPOSE THE APPLICATION ON PRINCIPLE, ALTHOUGH HE RECOGNIZED IT WOULD HAVE NO IMMEDIATE EFFECT ON PAA'S INTERESTS. HE WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED THAT CONCURRING IN THE INITIATION OF AIR FRANCE SERVICES TO ANOTHER IGS DESTINATION COULD SERVE AS A PRECEDENT FOR FUTURE AIR FRANCE ACTIVITIES IN PAA'S IGS MARKET. FURTHERMORE, THERE WAS ALWAYS THE POSSIBILITY BA WOULD WANT TO BALANCE BUSINESS IT LOST AT DUSSELDORF BY ADDING FREQUENCIES TO THE SHARED SERVICE TO STUTTGART, A SITUATION WHICH COULD DEVELOP GIVEN THE PROVISIONS OF THE ROUTE SWAP AGREEMENT. WE TOLD RUNNETTE THAT WE THOUGHT IT BEST TO SUSPEND JUDGMENT UNTIL WE KNEW THE BRITISH REACTION, AT WHICH TIME WE WOULD BE IN TOUCH FOR A FURTHER REVIEW OF THE SITUATION.

5. COMMENT: THIS PROPOSAL IN THE AGGREGATE STRIKES US AS NOT LIKELY TO IMPROVE AIR FRANCE'S REVENUE PERFORMANCE
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BONN 01209 221807Z

ON THE IGS. INDEED, WE FEEL THE CARRIER'S AVERAGE LOAD FACTORS MAY WELL DECLINE, A FACT WE SEE AS HAVING SOME BEARING ON THE GOF ARGUMENTS THAT CONCERN FOR AIR FRANCE'S FINANCIAL POSITION HAS NECESSITATED ITS HARD LINE ON PAA'S BERLIN/PARIS CHARTERS.
HILLENBRAND

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CIVIL AVIATION, AIR SCHEDULES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BONN01209
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760025-1057
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760133/aaaabcjn.tel
Line Count: 113
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 BONN 19526, 76 STATE 11731
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <12 AUG 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CIVAIR: AIR FRANCE PROPOSAL OF ADDITIONAL IGS SERVICES
TAGS: EAIR, GE, WB, UK, US, FR, AIR FRANCE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006